

John and Michelle Erickson and wishing Julia Marie Erickson a very Happy Birthday.

CONGRATULATING NATIONAL
TEACHER OF THE YEAR KATH-
LEEN MELLOR

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kathleen Mellor for being named the 2004 National Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Mellor, a resident of South Kingstown, Rhode Island, is the first Rhode Islander and also the first English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to be honored with such an award.

Mrs. Mellor currently teaches at Davisville Middle School and Hamilton Elementary School. She has twenty-three years of experience as a teacher and has worked with the North Kingstown School Department since 1985. She developed an ESL program for the school system that allowed ESL students to remain in mainstream classrooms for the majority of their day. She fostered a community within the school, while encouraging students to share their own cultures and languages with one another. This first-rate program flourished and is still in place today.

In addition to her many academic accomplishments, Mrs. Mellor volunteers in her community and started a program called Ladybugs where mothers of ESL students can practice their conversational English, so they can better understand their children's new lives. In recognition of her creation of a warm learning environment, energetic disposition, and determination for her ESL students to succeed, she was nominated for, and won, the 2004 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year Award.

Mrs. Mellor was named National Teacher of the Year by the Council of Chief State School Officers on April 20th, 2004. Today she will be recognized for her achievements by President Bush in the Rose Garden of the White House. In the next year, 150 national and international groups will have the honor of hearing Mrs. Mellor speak while she travels as the national ambassador for the teaching profession.

Mr. Speaker, it is not often enough that the hard work and determination of our educators are acknowledged, so it is with great pride that I recognize an exceptional teacher like Kathleen Mellor for all her accomplishments.

I hope our colleagues will join me in congratulating Kathleen Mellor on her award.

VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues the following essay written by one of my constituents.

[From the 2003-2004 VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Contest]

MY COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S FUTURE
NEW MEXICO

(By Christina Durano)

The future of America does not depend on power of its government, the wealth of its

corporations, or the abundance of its natural resources. The future of America lies in its young people and their commitment to this extraordinary nation. As a young person, I cannot foretell America's future, but I can help decide it by my beliefs, my actions and most importantly my commitment to America's future.

Why is commitment so important? Because commitment is the power that enables a person to achieve his highest goals and greatest aspirations. Commitment is knowing what you want, and doing whatever it takes to get it. And, as an American, I am committed to my nation's future, in four distinct ways. Four C's, if you will.

I am committed to the common cause of freedom and equality for everyone, regardless of age, gender, race or religion. George Bernard Shaw said, "Liberty means responsibility." And responsibility requires commitment to the common cause of freedom. Without this commitment, the dreams of Americans, young and old, cease to exist. Personally, I'm looking forward to a college education, but because I've chosen alternative schooling, I need colleges to view potential students equally, without prejudice, whether they attend to public school, private school, or homeschool. Freedom, the common cause that upholds "liberty and justice for all", is dependent on each citizen's commitment.

Secondly, I am committed to communicating my convictions in both public and private situations. When I turn eighteen, like every other American citizen, I will be given the right to vote. I will use that right because I know that each vote counts. History records that Abraham Lincoln, one of the most influential Presidents ever, won his Presidency by only one electoral vote. In the same way, however, Adolph Hitler won his dictatorship by one vote. But even before I turn 18, I can communicate my convictions by living my life in accordance with deeply held beliefs. It may not be convenient or comfortable, but that's what commitment is all about. Commitment isn't a dream, a hope, or a goal; commitment is a lifestyle. And I am committed to communicating my convictions so that I can make a difference in America.

Making a difference often means creating change, the third "C" to which I am committed. An old proverb states, "If you want something to change, you have to change something." Change is the pathway to improvement, particularly when it is enacted with purpose and principle. I am one of millions of students who have the opportunity to determine America's destiny. So, does that mean I only have a slight chance of affecting change? Not at all! One-in-a-million changes happen every day. With my commitment to America's future, I can meet new challenges, overcome obstacles and influence others for change. I am committed to change because I know that if we never change, we will never find a better way.

My final "c" of commitment is caring. I have committed myself to caring by visiting nursing homes, helping clean neighbor's yards, and leading children's activities at a local daycare center. The tragedy of September 11 forced citizens to look beyond themselves and the result has been a wave of volunteerism sweeping across the country. Caring for one another unifies us as Americans. Caring is the key to a strong country and I am committed to caring.

With commitment to these four C's, I can help determine America's future. I am committed to America—to its common cause, to communicating my convictions, to changing and to caring. With this fourfold commitment—these 4 "C's", I foresee a great future for the greatest nation on earth. That is my commitment to America's future.

HONORING DR. DANIEL BERTOCH

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Daniel Bertoch, a dentist in my congressional district who routinely provides free dental services to those in his community who cannot afford them.

I met Dr. Bertoch and his staff several years ago while visiting businesses in my congressional district. Dr. Bertoch's office, located in Citrus Park, serves many of my constituents in Northwest Hillsborough County. He told me then that he believed in the importance of civic responsibility and helping those in need.

I am pleased to say Dr. Bertoch has acted on that belief. He recently invited a group of less fortunate children from the community to his office for free dental services. He and his staff (Dr. Maria Egir, Mary Anne Futch, Valera Senden, Janice Jonasson, Leigh Allen, and Maria Goetz) treated 17 children over the course of an entire day. They provided comprehensive exams to the children, gave them fluoride treatments, filled their cavities, and provided each child with a full dental treatment plan and copies of their x-rays. They also served breakfast and lunch to the group with the help of local businesses and hired someone to paint faces and make balloon animals for the children. As Dr. Bertoch said, "a great time was had by all."

Dr. Bertoch told me that he realizes that charity is not a health care solution. He added, however, that along with proper funding, communities can find ways to help underserved children who need basic health and dental care.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Bertoch and his staff of caring professionals exemplify the spirit of generosity and compassion which forms our country's foundation. I am proud to know them and commend their work to our colleagues as we continue our efforts to make health care more accessible and affordable.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TAMBOR
WILLIAMS

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity and pay tribute to Tambor Williams, and thank her for her tireless efforts serving the people of Colorado as a four-term member of the Colorado House of Representatives. Tambor will always be remembered as a dedicated public servant and leader of the community. As she celebrates her retirement, let it be known that she leaves behind a terrific legacy of dedication and commitment to the Colorado General Assembly and for the people of Colorado.

A practicing lawyer and professional mediator, Tambor has used these skills to become an efficient and effective leader in the General Assembly through her four terms of office for District 50, which serves Weld County. She serves as the Speaker Pro Tem of the House, chairs the House Business Affairs & Labor